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American farmers vs. Hawaiian planters



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AMERICAN FARMERS VS. HAWAIIAN PLANTERS.

(By B. W. SNOW, Statistician Orange Judd Farmer.)

There are 10,000,000 farmers in the United States and 30,000,000 people directly dependent upon the pursuits of agriculture. They represent 40 per cent. of our population and a much larger proportion of our national wealth-producing capacity. They furnish \$700,000,000 of our annual exports, or seven-tenths of our total trade. In direct and indirect taxation they pay well toward one-half of our national, state and local taxes. Upon their prosperity depends the prosperity of the nation.

There are a few hundred sugar planters in Hawaii. They have grown inordinately wealthy through their free access to our market for their sugar. In twenty years, in addition to the legitimate profits of their business, this country has given them \$70,000,000 in the duties it has remitted on their products through the operation of the Hawaiian reciprocity treaty of 1875. Our own people have paid taxes to make up this deficiency. This gift to Hawaiian planters and burden upon American agriculture now amounts to \$8,000,000 a year, and the stake for which the Hawaiian Sugar Trust is playing is a continuation of this in perpetuity.

The question of Hawaiian annexation is an issue between the American Farmer, the tax payer, and the Hawaiian Planter, the tax eater. Other issues are irrelevant, brought in to becloud the real issue, and the annexation appeals to patriotic sentiment and frantic wavings of "Old Glory" are for no other purpose than to conceal the cloven foot of this purse-swollen foreign Sugar Trust.

What the American Farmer Wants.

Facilities for production are now such that except in years of crop failure, either at home or abroad, we can produce the staple crops in greater volume than our markets at home and abroad demand. As a result, prices of staples have declined to a point where their production is unprofitable. Wheat, corn and cotton growers, whatever future increases in the world's population may have in store for them, for the present face a condition where their hope of remunerative labor depends upon crop failure or famine. New markets or new products must be found. Of new markets there are none to which access can be readily found for the old staples. There are opportunities for the exploitation of new products, and the gold-

an opportunity of all is the establishment of an American Sugar Industry which shall monopolize the \$100,000,000 a year market which we now furnish to the black and yellow sugar growers of the tropics, and the enterprising beet growers of France and Germany.

This country has every requirement of soil and climate for the production of the sugar beet. It is lacking only in experience and knowledge. So long as the production of the staples was profitable, rural conservatism operated to postpone experiments in a new field of agriculture in which the requirements were radically different from our agriculture as already practiced. The past three years with its pinch of unremunerative labor served to induce thousands of men to make experiments with beets, and there are now data for a positive statement that with the ordinary encouragement which it has been the wise policy of our government to give new industries, the American farmer can in a few years supply the American consumer with the 2,500,000 tons of sugar which he uses each year. The tests of 1896 and 1897 demonstrated that our farmers are ready to do their part toward opening this new field to American labor, and securing the distribution to our own producers and our own labor of the \$100,000,000 a year, one billion dollars in ten years, which now goes to competing agriculture in other countries.

The benefits of an American Sugar Industry will not be confined to those farmers alone who enter upon beet cultivation. It affects the whole body alike by reducing the acreage devoted to other crops, leaving the corn grower and the wheat grower with fewer competitors, and furnishing him an additional home market for his crops through the employment of a vast body of labor in a non-competitive field.

What stands in the way of this consummation? Hawaiian sugar only. The present tariff operates satisfactorily so far as all other sugar is concerned, but the very legislation intended to benefit American farmers is nullified in a large measure by the fact that the Hawaiian planter is so situated as to secure every advantage intended for our own farmer. The reciprocity treaty of 1875, admitting his sugar free, gives him, through this remission of the duty, an absolute bounty of nearly two cents a pound upon an industry thoroughly established. With cheap yellow labor, the richest sugar land in the world, and a business already paying as much as fifty per cent per annum on the investment, what chance is there to establish our own sugar industry if the protective duty of nearly two cents a pound stands in favor of his product as well as our own? The futility of trying to induce American farmers to enter the field with such competition was patent, and those interested in their welfare immediately asked Congress to repeal the Hawaiian reciprocity treaty, so that our own farmers might secure the advantage of the protection given in the new tariff law. Right

here the present campaign for annexation began. No sooner was the fact pointed out that the Dingley law, with reciprocity still in force, meant a bounty for Hawaiian sugar rather than any encouragement for home production, than the annexation treaty was trotted out to head off any effort to repeal the reciprocity treaty. This now brings us to the point where we can understand

What the Hawaiian Sugar Trust Wants.

In 1876 there were twenty-six sugar planters in Hawaii, and their annual production of sugar was about 20,000,000 pounds. In that year a reciprocity treaty was "jammed" through Congress, the affirmative vote in each branch being a minority of the whole membership, in spite of the protest of such veteran statesmen as Wm. D. Kelley in the House and Senator Morrill in the Senate, and in the face of an able committee report against the scheme. Hawaiian plantations doubled in value, and the production of sugar went up by leaps and bounds until in 1893 the islands produced 330,000,000 pounds. During the twenty-one years since passed these planters have been paid a bounty on every pound of their sugar equal to the duty thus remitted. Their profits have been exorbitant. They scoured the world for cheap contract labor, filling the island with the very lowest classes of Japanese and Chinese laborers. The United States has had no revenue from Hawaiian sugar or rice. It has in effect paid these planters a bounty at the expense of our own tax payers, because the duty thus remitted created a vacuum in our revenues which our own burdened tax payers have been called upon to fill by paying additional taxes to make it good.

To show what our people, largely our farmers, have been compelled to pay in the way of taxes in order to make good this gift to the little circle of planters, see the following statement from a treasury report showing what has been remitted in duties for their benefit:

Duties remitted on sugar and molasses.....\$58,830,744

Duties remitted on rice..... 5,290,981

making a total transferred from the pocket of the American tax payer to the coffers of the Hawaiian Sugar Trust in twenty-one years of \$64,121,925.

This tribute grows yearly and now amounts to some \$8,000,000 each year, above the legitimate profits of their business. Now comes this annexation scheme, the whole aim of which is to saddle this vast and growing tribute upon us for all time. With such a stake to be played for, is it any wonder that this Trust of tax-eating millionaires maintains a permanent bureau of lobbyists at Washington, floods the country with literature, subsidizes the press from New York to San Francisco, and conducts a campaign in which the lavish use of money is beyond all precedent.

The Issue Joined.

The issue at stake is simple enough. On one side the American farmer demands the privilege of developing the sugar resources of his own country; an opportunity to engage in a lucrative branch of production and to live up to the national resources, which God has given him. On the other side stands a small circle, smaller in number than the average farmers' club in this country, possessing millions, and with incomes fabulous beyond the wealth of princes, demanding that the tribute which they have been levying upon American tax payers for twenty-one years shall be granted them in fee simple for all time.

On such an issue can the result be doubtful? Sugar Trust money wrung by unjust taxation from the over-burdened farmers of America may buy individuals, may subsidize a large section of the press, may maintain a literary bureau, may even attempt to defile the law-making power, but no fund is large enough and no agents active enough to reach the great farming vote of this country. The American farmer holds in his hands the political destiny of three-fourths of the membership of the National Congress. If he but demands his rights, his voice will be heard above the whisper of the tempter. Congress dare not refuse to listen when the farmers of America voice a united demand.

Let every farmers' organization declare itself in no uncertain tones by resolutions addressed to the Senators and Representatives who represent it at Washington. Then let every individual by petition, or, better yet, by personal letter, tell his Representative that he knows his rights and demands them, and that betrayal at this time will never be forgotten or forgiven.

Annexation Arguments Answered.

In view of the agricultural interests that are threatened by this organized raid of greedy selfishness, it would be expected that annexationists would present some arguments to convince the American farmer that he should continue paying tribute. No such argument addressed to the farmer's intelligence is forthcoming, but instead the effort is made to distract attention from the kernel of the issue by dragging in irrelevant matters. The American farmer is always ready to consider every question on its merits, and if the general good demands a sacrifice of his personal interests he is always ready to make that sacrifice.

In the foregoing pages we have pointed out plainly the fact that a consummation of this annexation scheme will work great and lasting injury to our agricultural interests. It now remains to be seen whether any arguments can be advanced to show that the public good demands this sacrifice. The arguments generally presented, and an analysis of them, might be thus summed up:

1st. The natural trade relation of Hawaii is with the United States. With annexation both the import and export trade of the islands would be secured forever.

Ans. Practically all the export trade the islands have or ever will have is in sugar. The United States is the only market in the world in which this sugar can be sold. We have had the whole trade from its inception and will continue to hold it through the natural laws of commerce. The imports of the islands have always come from this country, and our geographical situation is such as to exclude any other nation from undue participation.

2nd. American money is largely invested in the islands and it should be protected by American laws.

Ans. Such American money as is in Hawaii sought foreign investment, has escaped all American taxation and is no more the concern of this government than is German money invested in the United States an excuse for German interference in our political affairs. To accept this argument would be to establish a dangerous precedent. If we absorb Hawaii because some of our citizens have financial interests there, could we say nay should the German capital in Argentina demand the surrender of any portion of that country to the Fatherland?

3rd. The people of Hawaii offer their country as a free gift, and it is not policy to refuse so rich an offering.

Ans. What people? Not the Hawaiian natives. They oppose it almost unitedly. The present oligarchy does not represent the native population. It overthrew the native government through the connivance of our diplomatic representative and with the assistance of our navy. It represents but a mere handful of the population, and is maintained in power simply because by the constitution adopted practically the whole native class is disfranchised. It offers stolen goods, and who says Uncle Sam must stand before the world as a "fence" for much property? The Hawaiian annexationists dare not submit the question to a vote of the whole population of the islands, as was done when we once proposed to annex San Domingo.

4th. If we fail to annex the islands some other nation will take them.

Ans. In 1843 Mr Webster as Secretary of State secured a joint treaty or agreement with Great Britain and France under which they relinquished all claim to the control, seizure or domination of the islands. For fifty years, notice has been repeatedly served upon the world that this country will allow no foreign power to control the islands. Every Secretary of State from Webster to Blaine repeatedly declared that we had no designs on Hawaii ourselves, but that her independence would be maintained by us. Is there a nation of the globe willing to go to war with the United States

in an attempt to seize a country over which we have virtually extended a protectorate? In the face of our repeated declarations there is just the same probability of some nation seizing California as Hawaii. In either case there would be knowledge that war would instantly follow. Under our protection, Hawaii is just as safe from foreign molestation as under our ownership.

5th. Experts in the science of war declare that the possession of these islands and their fortifications would materially aid in the defense of our Pacific coast, and that on this account it is highly desirable that we should control them.

Ans. This is what might be called the military reason, and it is the only one deserving of any consideration. Fairly stated, the claim is this: The Hawaiian group is the only point in the Pacific ocean which an enemy could use as a base of supplies in a naval attack on our coast. Barred from shelter and supplies there, a navy operating against us would be forced back several thousand miles to secure coal, and naval vessels could only barely carry enough to enable them to reach our shores, where they would be helpless, because of their inability to renew their supplies, bearing in mind that coal is a contraband of war and cannot be purchased in a neutral port. With this condition, the military argument clinches its point by claiming that the United States should so control and fortify the group as to prevent their use as a base of operations by any other power. This is the strongest argument which annexation can offer. Unless it can be met, there may be sufficient justification for asking the American farmer to sacrifice himself for the good of his country. How can it be met?

In the first place, the one great naval power of the world, the one whom we have fought and the one whom many believe our only possible foe in the future, Great Britain, has already a fortified station, coal and supply depot in British Columbia, right on our Pacific coast. The possession of Hawaii, then, is no defence against Great Britain. The question, then, comes back, Is it necessary to possess and fortify the Islands against Japan, France or Germany? It is fortunately easy to show that possession of the islands is absolutely unnecessary.

Our government already owns in fee simple the only sheet of landlocked water in the Hawaiian islands that is in anyway fitted for a naval and coal station. This is Pearl river harbor, and from a strategic standpoint, Pearl river harbor is all there is to Hawaii. In that harbor we have the kernel; why should we covet the shell? The London Times says, "The maritime power which holds Pearl river harbor and moors her fleet there, holds also the key of the north Pacific."

Does this not satisfy every requirement raised by this argument? We have only to fortify Pearl river harbor and no nation can grab the "key

of the north Pacific." The harbor is ours absolutely already, to do with as we please. So long as our guns at that harbor are effective, we need no more Hawaiian soil to use as a defense of our Pacific coast.

Having this citadel already, but without a single gun with which to defend it, would it not be a proper policy to divert the \$8,000,000 a year we are now virtually paying into the Hawaiian Sugar Trust coffers as a bounty, to the fortification of this harbor? The \$65,000,000 we have already taxed our people to present these planters would make our station there impregnable. That is gone, however, but if we now cut off these tax eaters and for the next ten years spend their bounty in fortifying Pearl river harbor we need give ourselves no further uneasiness over an attempt of any other nation to grab Hawaii. Instead of ourselves grabbing more, we had better spend our time and money in improving what we already have.

Arguments Against Annexation.

1st. It means failure of the effort to establish a beet-sugar industry.

2nd. It means perpetual taxation of our over-burdened farmers to pay a bounty to an industry in which exorbitant profits are already made.

3rd. It means the addition of another gigantic trust to the too many we already have, and that, too, a trust which deals in yellow contract labor, and is already an expert in manipulating legislation.

4th. It means that as only a very small minority of the inhabitants of the islands desire annexation, we will be in the position of using force to impose a government upon a people without the consent of the governed.

5th. It means either that the thousands of Japanese and Chinese coolie laborers are to be kept in a condition of semi-slavery, or else admitted to the privileges of American citizenship. Either condition is repugnant to our institutions.

6th. It means two more United States senators from a rotten pocket borough, who will represent the Hawaiian Sugar Trust.

7th. It means that Hawaii will eventually be made a state, and that our election of a President may depend upon the returns from the Portuguese, Chinese and Kanaka wards of Honolulu.

8th. It means that our national precedents of an hundred years are to be broken, and we to begin land-grabbing in competition with Great Britain, Germany and Russia, with all the dangers that involves.

9th. It means the necessity of an ever-increasing navy to defend outlying possessions, and to hold our own with other robber nations.

10th. It means the betrayal of our own tax payers to further enrich a few planters.

11th. In short, it is the case of the American Farmer and Tax Payer vs. the Hawaiian Planter.

A Formal Protest.

One feature of the formidable opposition that is being directed against the annexation of Hawaii by congress, is the formal protest of the beet-sugar and cane-sugar interests. It was sent to each and every member of congress last week. It is an impressive legal document, printed in proclamation style in red and black on linen parchment with seal, and reads as follows:

In the name of the farmers of America, we respectfully appeal to the honorable senate and house of representatives in congress assembled:

Firstly—We solemnly protest against hasty consideration in Congress of the treaty of annexation with Hawaii.

Secondly—We most urgently request that this subject be treated with the deliberation its vital importance deserves, thus affording the people of the United States sufficient time to inform the honorable Congress of their views.

Thirdly—The farmers of this country oppose annexation. The sentiment among them against it is well-nigh unanimous. Their opposition is based upon the highest patriotism and most disinterested motives—the national welfare, political justice.

Fourthly—In addition to these reasons for its defeat, the farmers recognize that annexation would seriously interfere with the otherwise promising development of our domestic beet-sugar and cane-sugar industry. Already the bare possibility of annexation has called a halt to numerous sugar factory enterprises, which had promised a home market to farmers for a new and profitable crop. Defeat annexation and you remove the last obstacle in the way of enabling American agriculture, capital and labor to produce the \$100,000,000 worth of sugar annually imported heretofore.

Respectfully submitted, The American Sugar Growers' Society.

Sealed by its officers: R. M. Allen, president, Ames, Neb.; also president Nebraska sugar-beet growers' association; C. A. Farwell, vice president, New Orleans, La.; also president American cane growers' association of the United States. Herbert Myrick, treasurer, 52 Lafayette place, New York city; also president Orange Judd Company, and editor American Agriculturist of New York, Orange Judd Farmer of Chicago, and the New England Homestead of Springfield. B. W. Snow, secretary, Marquette building, Chicago; also statistician Orange Judd Farmer.

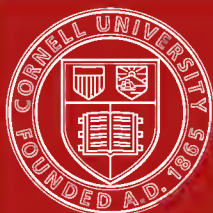
Danger to the Beet Sugar Industry.

A halt has been called to numerous beet sugar factory enterprises. Why? Because there is a possibility that the Sandwich Islands may be annexed to the United States by the present Congress. Free sugar from Hawaii can undersell sugar produced in the United States by from 1 to 1½c per lb. Capital is chary about embarking in our domestic sugar industry as long as this danger threatens.

American farmers cannot grow sugar beets or cane in competition with Hawaiian planters who employ coolie labor at \$3 a month and found. The island planters have already drawn from the United States a bounty of over \$66,000,000 by remission of duty. The Sandwich Islands product has nearly doubled in the past five years. Our sugar grown by yellow or coolie labor in Hawaii, the Orient and Egypt, the United States imported 250,000 tons in 1892, but nearly three times as much last year—700,000 tons. To enormously increase its sugar product, the Sandwich Islands have imported coolie or yellow labor so rapidly that Chinese and Japanese of the lowest character now comprise more than half the male population.

The first thing demanded by our farmers is that Hawaii be not annexed to the United States. The treaty of annexation should be defeated. To annex these islands under present circumstances would be a colossal mistake pregnant with mischief to the politics and government of this country. On purely patriotic grounds, annexation should be defeated, at least for the present. But in addition to these considerations of patriotism, farmers also, and justly, feel that to annex the Sandwich Islands now would be to seriously retard, if not prevent, the otherwise promising development of our domestic sugar industry.

The competition of free sugar grown by coolie labor upon these islands is the one black cloud that now hangs over the future of the sugar beet and sugar cane crops of the United States. Give us as fair a chance against this coolie product as we have against other foreign sugars and it will insure to American farmers this market for nearly \$100,000,000 worth of sugar heretofore imported annually. What such a new and profitable crop means to our farmers is best shown by the unprejudiced interest they now feel in this great industry.



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